

PBAF 513A POLICY ANALYSIS

Fall 2005

Monday and Wednesdays, 10-11:20 am

Parrington 108

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Office Hours: M 11:30-1:00 and by apt

This course is designed as a combination seminar and workshop to engage you with the definition, measurement, and analysis of policy problems. Policy analysis is part science, part art, and part politics; effective policy analysis considers the political and organizational dimensions of a problem along with its technical aspects. The goal of this course is to advance your critical understanding of these processes and your ability to apply this understanding to real world problems.

A quarter-long project will help you to integrate your knowledge of policy processes, organizational issues, and analytic techniques in the analysis of a topic of your own choosing. Seminar readings, in-class case exercises, and short assignments are designed to support this integration and application of skills.

Course Objectives

- Develop critical understanding of alternative perspectives on policy analysis and the role of the analyst.
- Become familiar with alternative approaches to the definition/description of problems and analysis of policy responses.
- Develop skills in
 - interpreting information to define and measure problems;
 - finding, assessing, and using information to document problems and generate policy responses;
 - identifying policy goals and criteria;
 - analyzing and predicting the effects of alternative policy options;
- Develop and apply skills obtained elsewhere in the core curriculum in the crafting and evaluation of alternative policy options.
- Refine skills in the written and oral presentation of policy analyses.

Class readings

There are two required texts for the course:

- Bardach, Eugene (2004). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. 2nd Edition. CQ Press.

- Weimer, David L. Weimer, Aidan R. Vining. (2004). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. 4th Edition Prentice Hall.

Additionally, selected chapters of Debra Stone's *Policy Paradox: the Art of Political Decision Making* can be found on E-reserve, as are **Electronic Hallway** cases. **Kennedy School of Government** cases can be purchased directly from their website, <http://www.ksgcase.harvard.edu/>.

Seminars

Class sessions will combine (limited) lectures, in-class case exercises and discussions, and time for peer-consulting on your projects. The productivity and fun of these seminars will vary in direct proportion to your level of preparation. I expect you to attend seminar, prepare for the day's activities, and participate in our large and small group activities.

Assignments and grades.

You will complete a case memo and a quarter-long policy analysis assignment that you will work on with a partner (to be submitted in three parts).

- Case memo: for 1 case of your choosing, prepare a 2-4 page memo that summarizes the policy problem, policy goals, possible strategies to deal with the problem, and your advice. Include a half page executive summary on the first page. (20 points)
- Policy analysis exercise: A 10-12 page memo analyzing a problem and evaluating alternative policy interventions. (60 points divided equally across three parts)
 - Part A: 3 to 4 page overview of the problem
 - Part B: 3 to 4 page summary of policy options and evaluation criteria
 - Part C: Decision matrix and recommendation with 2-3 pages of supporting text, plus rewrites of parts A and B.
- Class participation, including workshops and presentations. The quality of our seminar, discussions, case studies and in-class exercises will depend on your preparation and participation. Class participation is graded on both active engagement (as a speaker and listener) and evidence of preparation. You will have opportunities throughout the quarter to self-assess your participation. (20 points)

All assignments are due on the due date and points will be deducted for late submissions. They may be turned in on paper to my mailbox in 208 Parrington Hall or via on-line submission through a link on the course website (in Word).

Classroom Environment

A good seminar discussion should spark new ideas, insights, and syntheses. It should reveal areas of agreement and surface areas of disagreement. For this to happen, seminar members need to **listen** to one another, **respond** to and **challenge** one another's ideas. This can often feel very risky. A few ground rules may help.

- A successful seminar depends on the contributions of all members, although all participants will not make the same contribution. As the instructor, I have a responsibility to create and protect opportunities for participation. As students, you have a responsibility to use opportunities for engagement. The Quakers have an adage in Meeting: *No one speaks thrice until everyone has spoken once*. We certainly will not be keeping score. But this principle can help remind the more talkative among us that it is sometimes appropriate to be still, and the quiet among us that the group cannot proceed without their contribution.
- Self-reflection is important. As the instructor, part of my job is to obtain feedback and reflect on our management of classroom dynamics. As students, part of your job is to polish your communication skills. If you find speaking in groups difficult, your most important challenge may be to speak up and get your ideas on the table. If you are comfortable in groups, your challenge may be to develop listening skills and to monitor your own participation in order to allow "air time" for your colleagues. If you wilt in the face of conflict, your challenge may be to practice supporting your point of view. If you love a good argument, your challenge may be to learn how to engage in a dialogue that presents your point of view without diminishing or dismissing other views.
- Respect and sensitivity are important. We are a diverse community and we will be discussing ideas and issues that are both politically contested and sometimes deeply personal. We have a shared responsibility for creating a classroom environment that is respectful of our diversity. As the instructor, I have a responsibility to foster an environment in which students can safely express ideas and engage with sensitive issues. As students, you share the responsibility for creating a safe environment that is respectful of the diversity of ideas, life experiences, and values in the group. Together, we have a shared responsibility for acknowledging and addressing dynamics that compromise an effective and safe learning environment.

Course Schedule

		Topic/exercise	Read E = on E-reserves	Turn in
1.	Wed 9/28	What is policy analysis?	Bardach, Introduction, p. xiii-xviii Weimer and Vining, p.1-53: Ch 1 "Preview: The Canadian Salmon Fishery" Ch 2 "What is Policy Analysis; Ch 3 "Towards Professional Ethics" E Musso <i>etal</i> 2000. "Tradecraft: Professional Writing as Problem Solving" <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> 19 (4): 635-646	
2.	Mon 10/3	Defining a Problem and Setting Goals	Bardach, Part I 1-53. E Kingdon, Ch 5 "Problems" <i>Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies</i> Other resources: Weimer and Vining, Ch 5 "Rationales for Public Policy: Market Failures Ch 8 "Limits to Public Intervention: Government Failures"	
3.	Wed 10/5	NO CLASS		
4.	Mon 10/10	Case 1	E California's Adoption Assistance Program (Electronic Hallway)	1 sentence description of policy project due; Memo due if choosing this case.
5.	Wed 10/12	Gathering Evidence and Documenting Policy Problems	Bardach, Part II, p. 61-88 E Stone, Ch7 "Numbers" p. 163-187; Ch 8 "Causes" p. 188-209 Weimer and Vining, Ch 13 "Gathering Information for Policy Analysis" p. 309-323	
6.	Mon 10/17	Case 2	Portland's Urban Growth Boundary and Housing Prices: A Debate (A) (KSG: 1703)	Memo due if choosing this case.
7.	Wed 10/19	Problem Definition Workshop Guest: Government Accountability Office (GAO)		Bring 4 copies of your draft executive summary to class.
8.	Mon 10/24	Guest and Class Exercise: You are a GAO Analyst	Readings handed out on 10/19	Project Part A Due
9.	Wed 10/26	Creating Options and Criteria	Wiemer and Vining Ch 10 "Correcting Market and Government Failure: Generic Policies" p. 209-260 Ch 14 "Landing on Your Feet" Bardach, Appendix B "Things Governments Do" p.123-131 Part III "'Smart (Best) Practices' Research" p. 91-105	
10.	Mon 10/31	Case 3	E Communal Lands in Zimbabwe (Electronic Hallway)	Memo due if choosing this case.
11.	Wed 11/2	Selecting Criteria	E Stone Ch 2 "Equity"; Ch 3 "Efficiency"; Ch 4 "Security"; Ch 5 "Liberty" (pp. 39-108)	
12.	Mon	NO CLASS		

		Topic/exercise	Read E = on E-reserves	Turn in
	11/7			
13.	Wed 11/9	Criteria/policy options workshop		Bring 4 copies of your draft executive summary for Part B to class
14.	Mon 11/14	Projecting Outcomes and Evaluating Trade Offs	Weimer and Vining Ch 15 Goals/Alternatives Matrices E Hatry, Ch 4 "Estimating Program Costs; Ch 5 Estimating Effectiveness	Project Part B Due
15.	Wed 11/16	Case 4	Case: Managing Environmental Risk: the Case of Asarco (KSG # 847)	Memo due if choosing this case.
16.	Mon 11/21	Policy Adoption and Implementation	Weimer and Vining Ch 11 "Adoption and Implementation" E Shulock, "The Paradox of Policy Analysis..." E Lynn, "A Place at the Table: Policy Analysis, Its Pospositive Critics, and the Future of Practice."	
17.	Wed 11/23	Case 5	E Implementing a New Drug and Alcohol Treatment Model in Sacramento County (Electronic Hallway)	Memo Due if choosing this case.
18.	Mon 11/28	Communicating Policy Analysis	Bardach p. 53-59. E Kingdon Ch 9 "Wrapping Things Up" E Radin, "Reflections on Careers in Policy Analysis" <i>JPPAM</i> 22 (2): 299-313	
19.	Wed 11/30	Final Project Workshop Evaluation Outcomes, Trade-offs, and Recommendations Presentations		Bring 4 copies of matrix to class
20.	Mon 12/5	Presentations		
21.	Wed 12/7	Presentations		
	Mon 12/12			Part C due by 5 pm.